Girls Sweet Sixteen

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Diddle Arena has been home to the The Houchens Industries/KHSAA Girls state tournament for the past fifteen years.

But that’s about to change as Amy Bingham reports in this week’s View from the hill.

The KHS-Double A Board of Control voted last May to award the girls sweet sixteen tournament to Northern Kentucky University in 2016 and 2017. It’s a tradition on the hill that’s going to be missed by both the campus and the community.

Amy Cardwell \ Sports Sales Director, BGACVB

Andy Wagoner \ Operates Scoreboard

Gary Dillard \ Host Family

Rachel Goodman \ Dir., WKU Campus & Community Events

“Between the restaurants, the attractions and the hotels, it’s a big boost to the economy.”

A boost to the tune of nearly one million dollars but organizers say the Sweet Sixteen is about more than that.

“You can’t replace the idea of the girls high school sweet sixteen. This is the nostalgia, it’s an event in itself, it brings so much to the community.”

Andy Wagoner has run the scoreboard for the tournament since the first year it came to Diddle in 2001. He’s heartbroken the event is moving.

“I hope in a couple of years we’ll be able to get it back here. I think we do a top notch program.”

Each year the teams are paired with a host family in Bowling Green.

“If they need a doctor or dentist, a place to practice, that’s our job to help them out.”

“We will definitely miss it, there’s not anything that can fill that spot, but hopefully we can get it back, we really do.”

WKU has worked closely with the KHSAA and the Convention and Visitors Bureau to make sure everything runs smoothly.

“So many kinks have been worked out because it’s been here so long. When KHSAA comes to town it feels like family.”

“From Facilities management making sure the grounds look good, the trash is picked up we put our best foot forward for all these visitors.”

Indeed it’s a huge recruiting opportunity and with the amount of fans that follow some of these teams, Cardwell says this final tournament at Diddle could be the biggest yet.

“Typically you’re about 50,000 in attendance for the event but this year’s lineup it stands to surpass that.”

“We’ll go out with a great bang and that’s the idea. We want them to miss us.”

The tournament got underway yesterday and ends Sunday afternoon with the Championship Game. Cardwell says WKU will be bidding to have the girls sweet sixteen return to Diddle Arena.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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